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Fire in Apartments at Former Danvers State Hospital Officially Undetermined

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan and Danvers Fire Chief James P. Tutko have announced that the cause of the April 7, 2007 fire at apartments under construction on the site of the former Danvers State Hospital is officially undetermined at this juncture.

“In Massachusetts we have used a witness-driven protocol of fire investigation with great success for the past two decades,” said State Fire Marshal Coan. “There were no known witnesses to the start of this fire. Investigators conducted a thorough forensic scene examination and dozens of interviews, however, when investigators are unable to eliminate all but one most probable fire cause, they are required by their protocols to leave the fire officially undetermined, pending additional information in the future.”

“This fire burned undetected and unreported for some time before it was visible to passers-by,” said Chief Tutko. “The destruction of the scene was so extensive that the concrete footings of the building were affected, leaving investigators with little evidence to determine the point of origin and the cause.”

Coan added, “Investigators have found no evidence nor received any substantive information that this fire was deliberately set.”

The fire investigation team was made up of members of the Danvers Fire Department, Danvers Police Department and State Police assigned to the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

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